Political leadership in Italy: the president of the Republic during the so-called Second Republic

Abstract

The role of the president in Italy has become a casus sui generis among the other parliamentary systems due to the weakness both of the representative institutions (the Parliament and the Government) and of the political parties which have become more and more deligitimized. The literature on Italian presidents focuses mainly on systemic features having caused an increase in their power (Pasquino 2003b, Tebaldi 2005, Grimaldi 2012), with apparently no room for an analysis regarding their personal capacities and reputation. Indeed, presidents have not yet been studied as real leaders, first of all, because they are not elected directly by the people and secondly, because they are considered a sort of neutral power. But can they really be simply considered Constitutional guardians when even foreign journalists recognize how deeply their actions affect government direction? The aim of this paper is to explore how presidents have gained power to intervene effectively in the political scene, focusing on one feature mainly ignored by scholars: their leadership capital (Strangio et al. 2013, Bennister et al 2013). Our hypothesis is that the president of the Republic in Italy has become more active not only because of exogenous factors such as the dissolution of the party system and the weakness of government coalitions, but also for endogenous ones, namely their personal, relational and reputational skills. Therefore a leadership capital index has been proposed in an attempt to measure presidential leadership qualities.
Introduction

Even though the Italian political class has not been able to reform the presidency or the form of government but it has simply kept on debating about possible institutional reform from the 80s on, the role of the president of the Republic has changed during the so-called Second Republic. From Scalfaro to Napolitano all the presidents have had a great impact on the political scene, especially, when governments and parties have seemed to be particularly weak.

The role of the president in Italy has become a *casus sui generi* among the other parliamentary systems due to the weakness both of the representative institutions (the Parliament and the Government) and of the political parties which have become more and more delegitimized (Grimaldi 2012). Indeed, not only has presidential intervention become more significant in government formation in ways which are incomparable to those of other countries, but his influence in the legislative sphere has also grown. If moral suasion or referral are commonly used by presidents in parliamentary systems, there is no doubt that only in Italy has a constant and unexceptional use of these powers been played. On several occasions the Chief of State has been defined as a deputy chairman or a tutor of Italian politics (Fusaro 2003) because of his intense institutional activity during moments of extreme party weakness, that is to say, when the president’s accordion - to use a popular metaphor by Giuliano Amato - is over extended. Indeed, the Italian presidency was built to be extremely ductile and presidents can count on many unwritten praxes and informal powers.

The literature on Italian presidents focuses mainly on systemic features having caused the enlargement of their powers (Pasquino 2003b, Fusaro, 2003, Tebaldi 2005, Galiani 2012, Grimaldi 2012, Lippolis and Salerno 2013), but apparently there is no room for an analysis regarding their personal capabilities and their reputation. However, the most important scholars on leadership (Elgie 1995, Blondel 1987) proposed an inter-actionist approach, combining institutional and personal variables.

In Italy, presidents have not yet been studied as real leaders, first of all, because they are not directly elected by the people and secondly because they are considered a sort of neutral power. But can they really be considered simply Constitutional guardians when even foreign journalists recognize how deeply their actions affect government direction?

The aim of the paper is to focus on the leadership capital of the presidents in Italy in order to disentangle one feature ignored by scholars. In particular, how presidents have gained sufficient success to intervene effectively on the political scene?

In an adversary context such as the Italian one, the main problem has been to find a person who is perceived as neutral, meaning someone who does not support a specific party or faction, but at the same time a person who is seen as a possible decision-maker when parties are unable to agree on government formation or on policy. This search has often been a sort of squaring of the circle, as the last Presidential election confirmed when for the first time a president with a very long term (7 years) was re-elected.

This paper consists of five sections: in the first I deal with the problem of measuring leadership, taking into account political-science literature in order to construct a Leadership Capital Index (LCI) suitable to measure the leadership qualities of Italian presidents; in the second section I test the LCI on Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, in office from 1992 to 1999; in the third section I apply the LCI to Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, in office from 1999 to 2006; in the fourth section I apply the LCI to Giorgio Napolitano during his first term (2006-2013). Finally, in the conclusion, I analyze and compare the leadership qualities of the three presidents of the so-called Italian Second Republic.
1. How to measure leadership qualities of Italian presidents: a Leadership Capital Index proposal

Measuring leadership has primarily been an American concern, since in the US, the presidential form of government tends to concentrate in a single person all the executive functions and also merges in a single office the duties of the Head of Government and of the Head of State. Indeed, the first attempt at ranking American presidents was made in 1948 by Arthur M. Schlesinger, involving 55 historians and then, in the middle Nineties, this was repeated by his son, Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. (1997).

Despite the objections that this methodology always raises, over recent decades it has been adopted in other Westminster democracies such as in Canada (Granatstein, Hillmer 1999); New Zealand (Sheppard, 1998), Australia (Strangio 2013) and in the UK (Theakston, Gill 2006). In these countries, as Lijphart (1999) reminds us, the executive predominance over the legislative is very strong and in certain cases the supremacy of Prime Ministers within the cabinet has proved crucial (Norton 2003). In addition, recently, the importance of Prime Ministers has clearly grown even in consensual democracies and has led scholars to talk of the "presidentialization" of parliamentary democracies (Poguntke, Webb 2005). Italy has been included among the country cases of this study in the presidentialization assumption and regardless of whether or not this hypothesis has been verified (Karvonen 2010), there can be no doubt that Italian Prime Ministers have acquired a central role within the cabinet since the 90s (Calise 2005, Musella 2012). What has not been stressed enough in political science literature is that the Prime Minister is not the only political actor to have gained power as a result of the presidentialization process. Indeed, there is another: the president of the Republic, who is the only real monocratic figure of the Italian political system (Amoretti, Giannone 2011).

So far, there hasn’t been any attempt to rank presidents or Prime Ministers in Italy. Probably because neither the Head of State nor the Head of Government have ever found a proper definition for their powers (Grimaldi 2014) and their legacy as weak figures is still felt. During the so-called First Republic, presidents were considered sort of notaries who exercised passive oversight (Pasquino 2003b) and Prime Ministers were definitely “primus inter pares” (Sartori 1994) because the executive decisions were taken according to the collegiality principle and were often taken in non-institutional arenas by the ruling parties (Criscitiello 1994). So much so that the Italian Prime Minister was defined as the weakest Prime Minister of the Western World (Elgie 1995).

In this paper I attempt to measure leadership in Italy starting from presidents of the Republic rather than from Prime Ministers because, to my knowledge, there isn’t any kind of ranking for presidents of parliamentary Republics. Moreover, I think it is useful to focus on these political figures which have too often been ignored by scholars. Especially when their role has an impact on the evolution of certain parliamentary democracies.

I developed a questionnaire of 25 items regarding Italian presidents which was proposed to a panel of experts of politics. The questions asked for opinions on the work of the presidents starting with general questions such as "Can you give a global judgment from 1 (very poor) to 10 (excellent) on how the following presidents carried out their responsibilities?", to much more specific questions such as "Have the following presidents influenced foreign politics? (not at all, not much, fairly, very)" or "Has the power of nominating life-senators been used for political reasons? If so, by whom?".

The experts were selected by emailing four important Associations of Italian scholars: two of jurists (Associazione Italiana Costituzionalisti, AIC; Associazione Diritto pubblico e europeo DPCE); one of contemporary historians (Società Italiana per lo studio della storia contemporanea, SISSCO); one of political scientists (Società Italiana di Scienza Politica, SISP). These associations agreed to send their members a link to the web survey. I decided on this method as it guarantees anonymity so the answers should be more
sincere as the role of Italian presidents has become a very sensitive matter. Finally, the web survey was completed by 52 experts, namely 58.8% political scientists; 27.4% jurists and 13.7% historians. However, I’m convinced that the ranking procedure, even if done by academic experts, should be just one of the instruments adopted as it is not exhaustive. On the other hand, the concept of a leadership capital index, as proposed by Bennister et al. (2014), seems one of the best attempts to build an instrument that can be at the same time synthetic, as it provides scores, and flexible as it is an aggregate of different dimensions, involving different sources such as opinion polls, expert panels, election results, biography data etc. Obviously, an index summarizes complex situations, such as that of leadership, aggregating multiple indicators. In this way it is possible not only to evaluate the strengths and the weakness of leaders, but it is also possible to understand the sphere in which they have been stronger or weaker.

According to Bennister et al. (2014),

the Leadership Capital Index (LCI) is a diagnostic tool for tracking the strength of leader’s political mandates. [...]The LCI helps us spot key variations in the nature and aggregate volume of leadership capital. It can be applied to discrete leaders, but also in a comparative, ‘league table’ fashion. It is designed to systematically track and compare leadership capital. The index is the sum of the 3 elements of skills (soft and hard (s1+2), relations (r1) and reputation (r2). As an aggregate, the LCI is useful in understanding and looking across the key strengths and weaknesses of leaders (Bennister et. al 2014: 6-7).

Starting with this definition I focus on the three dimensions: skills; relations and reputation. However, in evaluating the presidents of the parliamentary system, I have modified many of the indicators adopted for Prime Ministers.

When considering Italian presidents, we have to be aware of their powers and their opportunity windows that are completely different to those of the executive leaders. Indeed, according to the definition of Baldassarre, an important constitutionalist, the head of state in Italy

is a “political power” [...]. More precisely, he a) does not make political decisions but is capable of influencing them; b) does not formulate trends, but maintains the existing ones or favours the new ones which are emerging; c) does not “control” decision making through powers of annulment, but does so by making those who decide reflect on their actions; d) does not launch crusades or give an impetus, but advises and encourages; e) does not represent those who govern or, worse still, a political party, but rather the totality of the national community (Baldassarre 1994, 477 translation mine).

As previously remarked (Grimaldi 2011), Italian presidents are political actors and they have an impact on at least five spheres of action 1) on the process of government-building 2) on the structure of parliament; 3) on the legislative process; 4) on representation and 5) on the integration of the nation.

Well aware of the above considerations, I decided to define the three main dimensions which form the Capital Leadership Index in the following terms.

1) The skills of leaders regard their cognitive, communicative and political abilities and their vision. The cognitive aspect refers to the capability to fully understand the environment in which presidents work, this means understanding how to enforce the Constitution and constitutional praxis, for this reason their possible legal education and training in law can be a useful indicator. The vision (Greenstein 2010) is connected with what the president thinks his role should be and what he considers important to do during his term, in other words what are the main issues which he feels have to be faced. This aspect can be deduced by from Inauguration Speech or from his other Speeches to the Parliament. The communicative element refers to the ability of presidents to interconnect with a wider public and to fruitfully use the mass media in order to spread their thoughts and opinions (Nye 2009). Their communicative abilities can be measured through their visibility on the mass media, especially on TV, (Cobianchi 2013).
Table 1. *The Leadership Capital Index of Italian presidents.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Sub-dimensions</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SKILLS capital</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Education and/or profession in law</td>
<td>1. absent</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. moderate</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. large</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>4. very large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td></td>
<td>How their role is conceived and main issues which have to be faced</td>
<td>1. absent</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. unclear</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. moderately clear</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. clear</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. very clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative</td>
<td></td>
<td>Visibility on TV</td>
<td>1. absent</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. low</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. moderate</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. large</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. very large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political longevity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Parliamentary, Party, Executive carrier</td>
<td>1. absent</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. short</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. moderately clear</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. long</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. very long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELATIONAL capital</td>
<td>Consensus among peers</td>
<td>Majority obtained at their election</td>
<td>1. low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. high</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. very high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust among the wider public</td>
<td></td>
<td>Polls on trust</td>
<td>1. absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. low</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3. moderate</td>
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<td>4. high</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. very high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esteem among experts</td>
<td></td>
<td>Global evaluation by the experts</td>
<td>1. absent</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. low</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. moderate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. high</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. very high</td>
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<tr>
<td>REPUTATIONAL capital</td>
<td>Past performance</td>
<td>Position as office holder</td>
<td>1. absent</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. poor</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. moderately clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. high</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. very high</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived neutrality</td>
<td></td>
<td>Type of party membership and expert evaluation</td>
<td>1. absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. low</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. moderately clear</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived influence in foreign politics</td>
<td></td>
<td>Expert evaluation</td>
<td>1. absent</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2. low</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>3. moderately clear</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. high</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived ability to solve crisis</td>
<td></td>
<td>Expert evaluation</td>
<td>1. absent</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3. moderately clear</td>
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<td>4. high</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived capacity to control legislation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Expert evaluation</td>
<td>1. absent</td>
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<td>2. low</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3. moderately clear</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. high</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Indeed, presidents' TV presence can be linked to their direct use of this means and even to their indirect ability to increase the interest of mass-mediads through the construction of media events (Dayan, Katz 1992). Finally, the political dimension refers to the president's direct experience in politics, as Weber (1918) reminds us, the parliamentary experience can be considered as sort of gym for potential political leaders because that is where they learn mediation strategies. Moreover, experience in a party can also be considered important for a potential leader, due to the fact that parties remain the basic unit of representative democracy and they are the most important referents for presidents in office. Therefore, political skills can be measured by the longevity of a president's political activity in the party, the parliament and the cabinet.

2) The relational capabilities refer to the president's ability to inspire trust and loyalty among peers, the wider public and experts. In order to measure such features three indicators were identified: the majority obtained at the president's election points to the level of consent among peers, namely MPs; data on trust provided by national polls regarding preeminent political figures are used to measure the level of consent among the wider public, namely the citizens, and data provided by semi-structured interviews of experts, such as jurists, political scientists, historians offer a picture of the judgment of the president's work.

3) Finally, the reputational dimension was investigated by considering five indicators: the president's past performance; his perceived neutrality; his perceived influence in foreign politics; his perceived ability to solve crises and his perceived capacity to influence parliamentary decisions. The first element refers to the president's previous experiences, in particular, as a high office holder and rarely, as president. This experience can justify their election or re-election. The second refers to their perceived neutrality. This doesn't mean that presidents cannot have any strong political position, but that they are not considered controversial, especially because they are expected to play a general and ecumenical role in which all citizens can recognize themselves. For this reason neutrality can be measured with two indicators: second-level party membership and through the evaluation of the experts. For second-level party membership I mean someone who was part of a large party without holding any important executive office or someone who was part of a small party even with an important executive role or someone who was not part of any party, namely an independent. Moreover, also the president's possible influence in foreign politics can be considered a variable of their reputational capital. Indeed, international approval can be both a cause for (re)election and for an increase in esteem among the political class. This feature is evaluated through the opinion of the panel of experts. Another important element is the ability to solve crises that can be measured by the president's impact -as seen by the experts- on government formation and/or on Parliament dissolution. Finally, we have to consider the president's ability to influence policy with reference to the evaluation of the experts.

Much of the data required to perform an LCI of a particular president is available from public sources, opinion polls, literature, biographies and tv monitoring data. Other material has been derived through the construction of a semi-structured questionnaire delivered to an expert panel.

The measurement process deals with the problem of assessing a score for every indicator; a full explanation is given in Annex I.

The final ranking of the presidents was carried out by aggregating LCI scores, see table 2. The scoring system is based on a minimum score of 12 points and a maximum score of 55 points and it offers the advantage of giving a synthetic judgment of Italian presidents and at the same time it enable us to focus on leadership nuances in different areas. In particular, this system allows us to understand how the three dimensions: skills, relational capabilities and reputation are important in defining and evaluating the performance of a single president.
Table 2. Aggregation of LCI scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ratings</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12-22</td>
<td>Scarce Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-33</td>
<td>Low Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34-44</td>
<td>Medium Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-55</td>
<td>High Capital</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My evaluation of Italian presidents is based on a combination of certain elements and political experiences concerning their previous activity such as cognitive and political skills and past performances and perceived neutrality and certain elements regarding their experience as presidents. Presidents have scarce Leadership Capital when they don’t manage to deal with difficult situations of government crises resolution and their decisions are contested by peers who may decide to ask for their impeachment. Moreover, their trust among citizens and their perceived neutrality are low. It’s clear that presidents with low capital are not appreciated by the wider public but they may still manage to make choices, especially over legislation control. Presidents with medium Capital are seen as important political figures or veto players within the political system as their actions have an impact on parties and governments. President with high Capital may become a sort of First in Command because of the level of trust among citizens, their perceived ability to solve government crises and to tackle foreign policy issues.

2. Scalfaro: the ferryman

Oscar Luigi Scalfaro was a staunch Catholic, member of a conservative wing of the Christian Democracy (DC) and a clearly anti-Communist politician. Nevertheless, in the Nineties with the implosion of the traditional party system and the transformation of the political offer, he seemed to be more sympathetic to left forces than to the new right wing parties. Indeed, during his term he was consistently on bad terms with Silvio Berlusconi, leader of Forza Italia. Both jurists (Fusaro 2010, Galiani 2012) and political scientists (Pasquino 2000, Tebaldi 2005) agree that during his term the role of the president became much more active and important.

The president’s Skills

Scalfaro not only had important cognitive skills, as he was a judge before entering politics, but he had an extraordinary long political carrier before taking the office of president. Indeed, Scalfaro joined the Christian Democracy in 1946, he was member of the Constitutional Assembly and MP for eleven legislatures, that is from 1948 to 1992. Moreover, he was Minister on several occasions. His political carrier is one of the longest among the Italian presidents, 46 years, second only to Giorgio Napolitano’s (Grimaldi 2012). These two elements: cognitive skills and longevity in politics are both ranked as very high (respectively 4 and 5) and they were definitely important in Scalfaro’s election. Indeed, with the exception of Gronchi and Saragat, all Italian presidents had a juridical background, and nearly all (with the exception of Einaudi and Ciampi) were MPs (Tebaldi 2005). As pointed out by Galliani (2012), Scalfaro was the successor of one of the most controversial presidents: Francesco Cossiga who was the only president of the First Republic who didn’t take part in the Constitutional Assembly and who pushed parties to change the political system to a majoritarian one. So this membership along with his long parliamentary carrier were seen as guarantees of the defense of the Constitution and of Parliamentarism. Moreover, Scalfaro’s...
position as a judge was symbolically important since his election took place two days after the murder of Giovanni Falcone, one of the most important anti-mafia judges.

Scalfaro’s vision has been analyzed through his Inaugural Speech and his Message to the Parliament of 18 September 1996. In his Inaugural Speech Scalfaro gave a clear definition of his role, stressing the need that he be “the supreme guarantor, the supreme moderator, the supreme magistrate and that he remain above and beyond any party or faction”. Moreover, he emphasized certain important issues which needed to be on the Government’s agenda such as the reform of institutions; the reform of the electoral law; the problem of the large budget deficit, that of criminality and finally, the moral issue, particularly important in that historical phase characterized by the “Clean Hands” scandal. The theme of institutional reform is probably the most developed in this speech, with an appeal for the formation of a bicameral commission for this purpose. However, Scalfaro stated that any reform should not overshadow the central role of the Parliament and the value of the Constitution². As a consequence, it is clear that for Scalfaro the reform process had not to distort the parliamentary form of government.

Scalfaro decided to use his power to send a message to Parliament, as granted by article 87.2 of the Constitution, in order to focus parliamentary attention on the secession theme supported by the Northern League. According to the president, this position had to be rejected but the “popular protest had to be listened to and had to receive a convincing political answer”. In other words, Parliament was driven to realize a reform to overcome the centralism of the State. This speech did not focus on a single specific issue, as the president also mentioned the labor theme and that of Europe and peace in foreign relations. For these reasons Scalfaro’s vision has been evaluated as moderately clear (3) as he was able to point out the major issues affecting the country to the Parliament even if he did not always offer specific solutions. Furthermore, he attempted to contain the push towards a Westminster model of democracy.

As far as Scalfaro’s communicative abilities are concerned, unfortunately there is little data concerning his visibility on television, as the communicative dimension of politics was almost ignored in Italy until the Eighties³. Therefore, I used the data available from 1995 to 1999 which covers 42 months⁴.

Scalfaro, even if he wanted to keep a low profile, as was the case with First Republic presidents, was forced to intervene often to clarify, suggest, give trust and consequently, he ended up being more visible than his "odd" predecessor, Francesco Cossiga. Indeed, Scalfaro tripled the number of utterances (967) compared to Pertini (341) and moreover, he managed to beat the so-called “picconatore” Cossiga (736)(Tebaldi 2005). This highlights the increasing interest of the press with respect to messages and statements of presidents. Probably one of the most interesting episodes was when the president decided to defend himself on live TV from the accusations of having used public funds for personal purposes when he was Minister of the Interior in the Eighties. These allegations by certain Secret Service (SISDE) officials who were under investigation, seemed to the president an attempt to avoid elections with a new majoritarian electoral law (Breda 2006) and an attempt to end the “Tangentopoli affair” with a general absolution or amnesty (Mammarella, Cacace 2011).

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³ In particular, Italian presidents have usually maintained a very low number of utterances in order to avoid conflict with the government. Pertini was the president who first discovered how to use the mass media in order to widen his visibility and therefore the level of presidential consent among citizens (Baldassarre, Mezzanotte 1995), Cossiga was the first president to use television in order to defend his positions against traditional parties. So much that, according to a famous journalist, Marzio Breda (2006), before Cossiga the Quirinale did not exist in terms of communication.
⁴ Indeed, the Osservatorio di Pavia made data on Scalfaro’s visibility from March 1995 to May 1999 available to me. Moreover in 1996 visibility was ranked for three months only: January, February and March.
The range of Scalfaro's monthly visibility mean on public television is from 7.7 minutes to 3.3 minutes in the three years and a half available. Unlike what happened with the other presidents discussed in this paper, for Scalfaro the total time of his visibility decreased from the second half of his term, as emerges in figure 3. Scalfaro's self-managed time on TV (SMT) is low and constant during the whole monitoring period, whereas the time granted by TV to him (news time, NT) shows a peak in 1995 and 1996 (2236 seconds per month), namely when he had a strong role in government formation, but then it decreased (under 1500 seconds per month), as his involvement seemed more limited and his popularity decreased as well (Hine, Poli 1997).

Despite Scalfaro having learned to use television to defend his office and also some of his decisions, there is still an apparent lack of ability to build media events to focus attention of public opinion on the presidency. As reported by the historian Maurizio Ridolfi (2003), Scalfaro’s call for a re-composition of divided memories concerning the Resistance between fascists and antifascists didn’t lead to a constant use of symbols and rituals and was therefore far from the idea of strengthening or building a sort of civil religion (Nevola 2003).

However, according to this data, Scalfaro's visibility is evaluated as high (4), as the mean value, during the whole monitoring, is 2137 seconds.

The president’s relations

Scalfaro was elected with 672 votes at the 16th voting round, namely with 67% of the consent of his peers. The presidential election process started on May 13th and lasted for 12 days. Indeed, this was one of the most difficult Presidential elections ever, a clear example of political stall. The most prominent candidates were Arnaldo Forlani (DC chairman), Giuliano Vassalli (PSI) and perhaps Giulio Andreotti (DC) if Falcone hadn’t died. However, none of them reached the quorum required. As pointed out by scholars (Ginsborg 1998), Italy was facing complex crises over legality, economics, the North-South cleavage, the disappearance of traditional parties and the appeal for a majoritarian democracy and finally mafia attacks.

Analyzing the data, it emerges that despite the fact that fragmentation of the candidatures was quite high during this presidential election5, it was medium during the 16th voting round, therefore Scalfaro was chosen from among 14 candidates. There were only 4.9% blank and nullified ballots in the case of Scalfaro,

5 Indeed, during the 10th voting round there were 28 candidates and 24 in the 15th.
confirming general agreement on his name. Indeed, Scalfaro was elected by the ruling parties (DC, PSI, PSDI, PRI, PLI) and by the relevant opposition parties (PDS, Greens, Radicals) with the exception of the Northern League.

According to some biographers, the esteem afforded to him by his peers was due to the fact that he was the exact opposite of Cossiga and his political Catholicism. In addition, to being considered a bigot\(^6\) for his work as undersecretary for Entertainment during Scelba’s government, Scalfaro was defined as a sort of “Cato in politics” (Breda 2006) for the role he played as chairman of the parliamentary committee of inquiry which dealt with the use of funds for the earthquake of Irpinia (1980). On that occasion he accused his own party of having wasted public funds.

Taking into account the previous remarks, Scalfaro was able to gain moderate esteem among his peers (2). Scalfaro’s level of trust among the wider public is difficult to measure because there aren’t clear data. However, according to certain analyses (Hine, Poli 1997), at the beginning of his term his consent among citizens was quite high, comparable to that of other institutions, capable of ensuring the proper functioning of democracy, such as the Constitutional Court and the presidents of the Chambers. Indeed, in the first two years (1992-1994) it was quite simple for Scalfaro to evoke popular loyalty through public statements of moral scorn against parties and the political class damaged by the Tangentopoli scandal. But later, his interventionism started to dismantle his consent especially when the political vacuum was filled by the new personality of Silvio Berlusconi who won the elections in 1994. In particular, presidential mediation was no longer interpreted as neutral and his decisions seemed to favor the left opposition parties. In other words, when parties re-gained legitimacy in part, trust in Scalfaro diminished. Therefore, the level of trust granted to Scalfaro was high at the beginning, but much lower from 1994 on, when he faced allegations of Justice Minister Filippo Mancuso\(^7\) who once again opened the SISDE scandal and accused Scalfaro of prejudice towards Berlusconi. Consequently, the lack of polls forces me to rank Scalfaro's level of trust among citizens as absent (1).

Scalfaro’s level of esteem among experts is average (3). Indeed, Scalfaro’s global capability to carry out his duties was evaluated as 6.4 on a scale 1 (very bad) to 10 (excellent).

**Presidential reputation**

Scalfaro’s past performance deals with the type of offices he covered and it can be considered very important (5), as he was elected president of the Chamber, the third office of the State, before becoming president. This important role proves he was considered an institutional figure by political forces, despite holding this position for just one month because in May 1992 he was elected president of the Republic. As previously pointed out (Grimaldi 2012), Scalfaro is one of the five Italian presidents\(^8\) who was elected president of the Chamber before taking office.

Another important aspect with regard to his reputation was his perceived neutrality, as one of the constitutional duties of the president is the capacity to represent the nation, therefore the polity, as a whole. From this point of view, Scalfaro seemed neutral, especially at the beginning when he distanced himself from his original party, the DC, heavily involved in the Tangentopoli scandal. As has been noted by biographies, this distance was consistent with the fact that he never took part in any important Dc factions during his previous political activity, making him a second level politician within his party. This subalternity

\(^6\) However, the most famous episode took place in a Roman restaurant in the fifties when he strongly reprimanded and almost slapped a young lady for her provocative clothing (Breda 2006 and Mammarella, Cacace 2011).

\(^7\) Filippo Mancuso was accused of ordering a series of ministerial inspections against judges who were investigating Berlusconi and, therefore, he was the object of a no-confidence vote and forced to resign. It was the first no-confidence vote against a single Minister in Italy.

\(^8\) The others are: Gronchi, Leone, Pertini and Napolitano. On the other hand, Cossiga was president of the Senate.
was a weakness during the First Republic but it became a strength for his election when the political landscape had changed (Breda 2006). However, during his term the level of his perceived neutrality decreased especially from 1994 when he refused to dissolve Parliament as requested by Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. From that occasion on, right wing parties considered Scalfaro a traitor and organized a strong campaign against him (Hine, Poli 1997). Moreover, the radicals who previously sponsored his candidacy, collected more than 200,000 signatures to start impeachment against Scalfaro who was accused of having violated citizen's political rights. The idea of a president incapable of being above parties is confirmed by the judgment of experts. Even if 47.7% of them evaluated Scalfaro's performance as quite positive, 29.5% affirmed he was not barely neutral and for 18% he wasn't neutral at all. Therefore, Scalfaro's perceived neutrality can be ranked low (2), as he was a second-level politician and experts' positive evaluations are lower than 55%.

Scalfaro's perceived ability to influence foreign politics according to the evaluation of the experts is moderate (3), as positive evaluations (sum of moderate and high influence) are 50%. Indeed, Scalfaro's international credentials were absent as he had never held an office in Europe or any specific role abroad. However, during his seven-year term, foreign politics became an important area of presidential interest. This was the result of many concurrent processes: first of all, the necessity to re-gain credibility after the Tangentopoli scandal for the Italian political class; secondly, a succession of weak governments with weak Prime Ministers who could not represent Italy adequately; finally, the new interest in and push for European integration which required important decisions by member-States regarding economic recovery. At the beginning, Scalfaro's attitude was critical towards the European Union especially for its strict requirements regarding Italian public finances, and in fact, he stressed that the Union was not to be conceived as an economic matter only. However, later he understood the importance of re-defining a European strategy for Italy, as his appointment of Prime ministers such as Amato, Ciampi and Dini, who had the explicit duty of reducing the Italian debt and improving the economic situation, proved. During his term Presidential duties in terms of "external representation" also increased. In particular, State visits were used to find new markets for Italian products and Italian enterprises.

Scalfaro's perceived ability to solve crises is generally considered high, as he was able to face the implosion of the party system in the early Nineties appointing three Prime Ministers with remarkable discretion (Fabbrini 1998). However, this peculiar situation of implosion helped his interventionism. With Scalfaro the idea of the Italian presidency changed completely for Italians and consequently what a president could and should do. As pointed out by scholars (Hine, Poli 1997), his influence was stronger in the first years when the parties were totally incapable of reacting to the scandals but it declined in the following years when new or reformed parties gained a credit of legitimacy. However, his capacity to handle institutional and political crises especially in the government building sphere, clarified what a president can do in emergency situations and from that moment on, the other political actors -parties and executives- had to seriously take into account what the president thought or preferred on a considerable number of issues. In other words, Scalfaro's ability to solve crises left a legacy, he drew a path to be followed in an emergency. Indeed, 77.2% of the experts ranked Scalfaro's ability to solve crises high (4).

Scalfaro's perceived capacity to control legislation is evaluated moderate (3) by the majority of the experts (54.8%), as he rarely intervened, but when he did it was significant. Indeed, he rejected the so-called "Conso decree" which was intended to decriminalize party financing, in order to close once and for all the "Clean Hands" season. According to certain journalists that rejection definitely crushed the First Republic, and it was considered a sort of death certificate. Moreover, one of the six suspensive vetoes required by

\[ \text{Actually, Scalfaro accepted the sentence of the Constitutional Court which expressed an opposite interpretation on party financing in comparison to the evidence emerged by referenda.} \]
Scalfaro allowed “the Head of State for the first time to enter into the merit of particularly controversial questions and to formally express his concern with regard to the decisions recently formulated by the legislator” (Grisolia 2009). The law in question regarded a series of regulations in financial matters, among which the provision for public financing of political parties appeared. From this point of view, Scalfaro was able to exercise a role also in the policy-making sphere.

3. Ciampi: the inventor of the homeland

Carlo Azeglio Ciampi was an independent. Indeed, he was a technician who had held prestigious positions but he had no previous party carrier or a professional politician’s profile and consequently no party clearly supported him. Probably the fact of being a sort of alien to politics (Mammarella, Cacace 2011) was one of the main reasons for the appraisal granted by the electoral body. They expected him to play a symbolic role for his term, limiting trespassing in the government sphere. Ciampi was determined to play his role with caution and moderation, keeping the balance among institutional powers and limiting as much as possible his intervention in order to keep his equidistance from the main political forces. However, his long cohabitation with Silvio Berlusconi, leader of the right coalition, caused many conflictive situations and therefore his use of moral suasion and of suspensive vetoes increased his counterbalancing power towards the government. In other words, Ciampi didn't intervene as often as left opposition parties would have wanted, however when he decided to act his efforts always had an impact on government provisions. Moreover, his sober style and his political project of a rediscovery of national patriotism produced great trust in him among citizens and the wider public. Indeed, Ciampi was one of the most beloved presidents after Sandro Pertini.

The president’s Skills

Ciampi’s cognitive skills can be evaluated as moderate (2) as he received a law degree in 1946 from Pisa University after his studies in literature at Scuola Normale- one of the most prestigious Italian Universities- in 1941. Moreover, also his political experience was limited. Despite his membership in the Partito d’Azione (PdA), an antifascist liberal-republican party active in the Resistance, until its dissolution in 1947, his commitment in politics is insignificant until 1993 when he was appointed Prime Minister by president Scalfaro and asked to deal with a compromised economic situation. In the following years he was chosen as Minister of Finance by centre-left governments for his competence in economics again as an independent and an expert. Therefore, his longevity in politics is very limited (1), less than 4 years (Grimaldi 2012). Probably well aware of his potential limits, when he became president he decided to form a working group, selecting important personalities with high legal experience such as Andrea Manzella, professor of parliamentary law and senator of the Ulivo and Sabino Cassese, professor of administrative law and ex Minister of Ciampi’s previous government (Breda 2006).

Ciampi’s vision has been analyzed through his Inaugural Speech and his Message to the Parliament on 23 July 2002. In his Inaugural Speech, Ciampi didn't define his role in terms of “Constitutional Guarantor” as Scalfaro had, but he focused on the necessity to represent national unity. This capacity seemed to be the most important one in a polarized political context where the transition between the First and the Second Republic still seemed incomplete. The first two themes which appeared in this Speech were to become crucial during his presidency and they were: Patriotism and Europeism. Moreover, he emphasized certain important issues which he felt should be on the Government’s agenda such as federalism; the reform of the electoral law; the reform of Public Administration and the reform of Justice.

Ciampi decided to use his power to send a message to Parliament in order to focus parliamentary attention on pluralism and information impartiality. According to the president, this issue was fundamental to assure
Democracy\textsuperscript{10}. However, according to historians this message is considered the first real outrage against Berlusconi’s government. Therefore Ciampi’s vision can be considered clear (4).

Considering Ciampi’s communicative performance it is possible to evaluate it in terms of his monthly visibility mean on public television. As pointed out by Cobianchi (2013), the president’s visibility is moderately high during his term, as his monthly visibility mean (total time TT) during prime time on the three Rai channels is from 5.6 minutes to 7.4 minutes\textsuperscript{11}. As emerges in figure 4, Ciampi’s visibility tended to grow every year. This data can be decomposed into two elements: 1) the time granted by television to the president (news-time) which follows the same trend as the total time, 2) the president’s self-managed time on TV which tends to decline, especially during the 6th and 7th year.

![Fig. 4. Ciampi’s monthly visibility on three Rai Channels. (Seconds for year)](image)

In particular Ciampi’s peak of visibility occurred in 2002 with a coverage of 29076 seconds (about 8 hours) that is one-fifth of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi’s coverage in a year, but more than that of the leader of the opposition, Rutelli\textsuperscript{12}. This data confirms how Ciampi exploited the mass media as a form of communication. Indeed, Ciampi was at his best in the construction of ad-hoc media events, generally regarding the celebration of national heroes or festivities or historical episodes. A clear example was the so-called “voyage through historical memory” a sort of pilgrimage to the places where episodes of the building of the Italian State and of the Italian Republic had taken place (Ridolfi 2003, Grimaldi 2011, Forlenza 2011). These presidential initiatives produced great participation on the part of the people and therefore a deeper interest on the part of the mass-media which reported Ciampi’s words and warnings. Taking into account the above elements, Ciampi’s communicative capacity is assessed as high (4), as his visibility mean value is 2270 seconds during the monitored period.

\textsuperscript{10} The Italian mass media system was object of international concern in those years because of the anomalous position of a PM owner of half of the free TV market. Indeed, Italy was ranked “partly free” by Freedom House in 2003. Italy retained the 74\textsuperscript{th} position of the world ranking after Benin, Botswana and Solomon Islands.

\textsuperscript{11} In Ciampi’s case, the monitoring time covers the period 2001-2006, namely 65 months.

\textsuperscript{12} According to an article published by the Osservatorio di Pavia (2002), Berlusconi’s total time between 2001-2002 was 149255 seconds (about 41 hours) while Rutelli’s total time was 21708 seconds (about 6 hours).
The president’s relations
Ciampi was elected with the first voting round with 707 votes, namely with 71.4% of parliamentarian consent. It was the second time that a president was selected at the first voting round after Cossiga’s election. The other possible candidates were -on the Catholic front- Franco Marino, Nicola Mancino, Rosa Russo Jervolino, and -on the secularist front- Emma Bonino and Giuliano Amato. However, the agreement between the PM D'Alema and the leader of the opposition Berlusconi led to one of the fastest presidential elections in Italian history. Ciampi was considered a political outsider and consequently the main parties hoped he, unlike his predecessor, would prevent the presidency from taking an active part in the political game. In other words, what parties were looking for was a notary who would consent to play a marginal, but symbolic role, closing once and for all the period of Italian transition between the two Republics and the active season of the presidency.

Analyzing the data, it emerges that the fragmentation of the candidatures was high, as Ciampi was chosen from among other 18 candidates and blank and nullified ballots constituted 7.3%. Nevertheless, Ciampi was elected by the ruling parties (DS, PPI, PdCi, Greens, Udeur) and by the most important opposition parties (FI and AN) with the exception of the Northern League and of the Re-founded Communists (PRC). Therefore, we can say that he had the strong consent (3) of his peers.

Ciampi’s level of trust among the wider public has been measured through public polls which are provided yearly by the public-opinion poll institute Demos & PI directed by Ilvo Diamanti. As reported in figure 5, Ciampi’s level of trust varied from high (under 70%) to very high (more than 70%) during his term. His popularity was built up in order to grant the presidency room to maneuver in a political context in which parties seemed to have fully regained their governing functions (Mammarella, Cacace 2011). Indeed, as Pertini’s experience proved, it is very difficult for the political class not to take into account the warnings of a popular and beloved president.

Figure 5. Ciampi’s level of trust during his term (percentage values)

From his inauguration on, Ciampi attempted to distance himself from daily political battles, seeking rather to become fully engaged in the recovery and valorization of the symbols of the nation. The national anthem and the Flag (Tricolore), found space in his speeches and public rituals. This political strategy proved particularly innovative, as the themes of national identity and patriotism had been carefully removed from public discourse in the years of the First Republic (Ridolfi 2003, Grimaldi, Riccamboni 2007). As pointed out
in a study of 2003: "not only thanks to these initiatives, but certainly also thanks to these initiatives, the popularity of president Ciampi is very high, raising confidence levels much higher than those of any other institutional or political figure" (Bordandini 2003: 351, translation mine). Moreover, according to the same research, citizens appreciated what president Ciampi did to increase their feeling of national identity and his effort to favor a more peaceful political climate (Bordandini 2003). His peak came in 2005 with a level of trust of 80%. Even considering the medium value, that is 71. 4%, his performance can be defined as very high (5).

Finally, considering the opinion of experts, there is a clearly positive evaluation of Ciampi's global capacity to carry out his responsibilities as they gave a mark of 8.3 on a scale 1 (very bad) to 10 (excellent). Therefore, also the esteem among experts can be ranked as high (4).

**The president's reputation**

Ciampi's past performance can be considered very high (5), as he was the president of the Central Bank from 1979 to 1993 and he was asked by president Scalfaro to become Prime Minister in 1993 in order to deal with an economic emergency. Later he was Treasury Minister in two centre-left governments: Prodi’s and D’Alema's cabinets. The economic successes which Ciampi obtained clearly had a positive impact on his reputation. Even though Ciampi was not a professional politician, his technical government was one of the best in Italian history (Cartocci 1997, Calise 2010) and definitely one of the most productive. Indeed, his one-year government enacted the majoritarian electoral law (the so-called *Mattarellum*); started the privatization process of public enterprises; started a new negotiation process with social actors (*Confindustria* and Trade Unions) to stop indexation for wage increases. Later, as Treasury Minister, he was the man who took Italy into the Eurozone. Indeed, his economic plan, based on economic recovery and international credibility, enabled Italy to fulfill two preconditions to enter the Eurozone: the readmission of the *Lira* in the EMS and the reduction of deficit-GDP ratio from 7.5% to 2.7% (Mammarella, Cacace2011: 268). It is clear that these successful policies improved his reputation as an effective leader.

Ciampi seemed to be very neutral, as 86.3% of the experts claimed he was good at unifying Italians despite, their political differences. Especially in the first three years of his term, Ciampi attempted to be faithful to the spirit of that institutional convergence which granted his election and therefore he tried to avoid any overlap with the activities of the government and the Parliament, even when Silvio Berlusconi returned to power in 2001. In the first phase of his cohabitation with Berlusconi, he tried to use soft powers —such as moral suasion— to convince the government to modify certain aspects of certain controversial provisions, the so-called "ad-personam laws" which favored the person or the business of the PM, under investigation in various trials¹³. Indeed, until 2003 he was criticized by the opposition parties for not carrying out his control functions toward the government. However, when Ciampi realized that collaboration with Berlusconi’s government was becoming harder and harder to achieve, he decided to strengthen his surveillance on the constitutionality of the law by using his hard powers. The suspensive veto of the so-called Gasparri law -on the reorganization of the television system- and that of the reform of Justice (Castelli law) triggered the retaliation on the part of Berlusconi who alluded to a presidential manipulation by "left mermaids" (Breda 2006). On this occasion, Berlusconi’s public campaign against the president was less powerful and successful, as the presidential level of trust was incredibly high, and even for Berlusconi it was difficult to damage. However, at the end of the presidential term, even the right-wing parties seemed in favor of his potential re-election which proves that Ciampi’s interventions were not based on prejudice towards Berlusconi, but on actual constitutional bias. Probably, in the first phase, Berlusconi misunderstood

¹³ Some examples are: law no 367/2001 on international extradition requests; law no 148/2002 which allows trials to be moved in cases of legitimate suspicion that the judge involved is biased; law no. 140/2003 on the immunity from prosecution of the holders of the highest offices of State.
presidential neutrality for compliance (Breda 2006: 129). In conclusion, Ciampi's perceived neutrality is ranked high (4), as he was an independent and positive evaluations by the experts are higher than 55%. Ciampi's international credentials were higher than those of his predecessors, as he had had contacts with the economic European elite during his long term as president of the Italian Central Bank. Moreover, he was responsible for Italian membership in the Eurozone and consequently, he was well known abroad. From the beginning of his presidency he capitalized on Scalfaro's legacy, in fact, he continued to travel throughout the world in order to improve the Italian position. Even though president Ciampi reaffirmed the traditional line of Italian foreign politics: Europeism, Atlantism and attention for the Middle East (Saiu 2005; Di Leo 2004), he seemed to differ with the political line of Berlusconi's government which was closer to the Russian and Israeli positions. In particular, Ciampi used his international credit to cover up certain embarrassing situations such as the clear anti-Europeistic position of Berlusconi's coalition partner, the Northern League, and certain PM blunders 14. Indeed, he was considered a guarantor of national unity and of the continuity of Italian foreign policy as well (Galliani 2012, 91, Puri Purini 2012). This legitimacy was important in particular when Ciampi intervened against Italian military participation in the Iraqi war within the "Coalition of the Willing" on the side of the US and the UK. Therefore, Ciampi's perceived ability to influence foreign politics was high (4), as positive evaluations (sum of moderate and high influence) by the experts were 75%.

Ciampi's perceived ability to solve crises is average (3), as the majority of the experts (40.9%) affirmed. Indeed, he never had a strong role in government-building during his term, as, from 1998 the bipolar order began to consolidate and therefore, the president lost the role of deus ex machina of the system. However, his intervention was not completely nullified, as he sponsored the appointment of pro-European Renato Ruggiero as Foreign Minister in the second Berlusconi government.

Ciampi's perceived ability to influence legislation was seen as moderate (3) as the majority of the experts (47.6%) confirmed. Indeed, Ciampi was the first president to clearly define moral suasion as one of the standard instruments in the president’s toolbox and to publicly claim the right to use it 15. During his term he often resorted to moral suasion in order to convince the government to improve certain provisions, however, not always were these kind of interventions successful (Pasquino 2003a), as the reform of the electoral law in 2005 confirmed. Indeed, the most effective controls on legislation were carried out through hard powers such as suspensive vetoes, despite their being sparingly used. In particular, Ciampi from 2003 tended to veto not only matters of evident unconstitutionality, but also the constitutional merit of laws having considerable political significance for the government (Balboni 2005) such as the Castelli reform (2004) or the matter of the inappellability of sentences of acquittal (2006). This capacity of strict control over the government in the policy sphere can be seen as confirmation that the president can have a strong role even when parties are organized and strong, namely when the bipolar context seems to be strengthening.

4. Napolitano: the first in command

Napolitano is one of the most political presidents of the entire Republican period. Indeed, not only is he definitely a professional politician but his foreground involvement in his original party is a real novelty compared to the other presidents who had only had long institutional carriers. Moreover, he is the first ex Communist to be elected president. In other words, Napolitano embodies the archetype of the pure

14 The most troubling occurred when Berlusconi compared Schulz -the socialist whip of the European Parliament and member of the SPD- to a Kapó of a Nazi concentration camp.

15 As previously pointed out, most of the Italian presidents had also used moral suasion however with strict confidentiality (Grimaldi 2011).
politician and that of the institutional figure at the same time (Ponthoreau, Rayner 2007). Until 2011 his intervention was strong, especially in the policy-making sphere, moreover when the right-wing coalition government started to crumble, he was able to manage the crisis by forming a technical executive (the Monti Government). Furthermore, Napolitano decisively intervened in foreign politics both to correct some of Berlusconi’s positions, as did Ciampi, and to specify the Italian position in the Libyan war when ruling parties seemed to hesitate. For these reasons he was a sort of First in Command, especially from 2011 on. Even if at first he was perceived as a president who represented just one part (the left) of the political spectrum, later he was able to build greater consent for himself, achieving important results in terms of trust among citizens.

*The President’s Skills*

Napolitano’s cognitive skills can be evaluated as moderate (2) as he received a law degree in 1947 from Federico II University in Naples, but he never practiced the legal profession.

On the other hand, his political longevity is evaluated as very high (5). He entered politics in 1945, joining the Italian Communist party. His political carrier is the longest of the Italian presidents: 53 years before taking office (Grimaldi 2012). He was elected to the Chamber of Deputies for the first time in 1953, and with the exception of the 4th legislature, he was an MP until 1996. Like the other presidents, he has had an impressive carrier within the institutions, as he was elected Speaker of the Chamber (1992-1994), then he was Minister of the Interior in Government Prodi I and finally, he was appointed life Senator by president Ciampi in 2005. Moreover, he was also active at the European level, as he was elected to the European Parliament (EP) twice (1989-1992 and 1999-2004) and he chaired the EP Constitutional Affairs Committee during the draft of the European convention. Unlike the majority of Italian presidents, he also had an impressive party carrier. Napolitano became a member of the Communist party’s central committee in 1956. In 1966 he became deputy secretary of the PCI and later he was responsible for certain strategic policy areas within the party, such as cultural policy, economic and employment policy, foreign policy and international relations (Napolitano 2005). Napolitano was one of the prominent leaders of the PCI right-wing faction16 and in the 8th (from 1981) and 9th legislatures (until 1986) he chaired the Communist group in the Chamber of Deputies.

Napolitano’s vision has been analyzed through his first Inaugural Speech on 15 May 200617. On this occasion, Napolitano defined his role in terms of “Constitutional Guarantor” as Scalfaro had, however he clearly stated he wanted to favor more peaceful relations among parties in order to achieve broad agreements on behalf of the country. In particular, he affirmed that the presidential role is about moderation and moral suasion, making it clear that the president carries out a general political function as party mediator. Moreover, he explicitly stated he didn’t want to be the president of the majority which had elected him, but he wanted to be the president of all Italians. In this speech, the president for the first time recognized a tension towards the majoritarian model of democracy which -he remarked- could not be accomplished if bad relations between ruling and opposition parties kept occurring. Moreover, for Napolitano it was necessary to ensure governability, avoiding parliamentary degenerations. A concern which was to become his polar star during his whole term.

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16 This faction was called “migliorista” (meliorist), a disparaging reference to the fact that Giorgio Amendola and his followers (including Napolitano) wanted to improve working-class conditions without revolutionizing the capitalist system.

17 Napolitano didn’t send a message to the Parliament as permitted by article 87.2 of the Constitution during his first term, as he doubted the efficacy of this power. However, a message was sent on 8 October 2013, six months after his second election and it dealt with the problem of the bad conditions of the Italian prisons, an issue which has led to the EU fines against Italy. It’s important to stress that Napolitano didn’t just limit himself to making the issue known, but he clearly listed all the options to solve the problem.
Moreover, Napolitano listed a large number of issues which he felt the executive should focus on, such as labor, immigration, culture and education, economics, justice and gender. However, the issue he gave most attention to was that of foreign policy. In line with his predecessor, Napolitano stressed the necessity to follow the traditional lines of Italian foreign politics: Europeism, Atlantism, attention for the Mediterranean Countries and equidistance between Palestinian and Israeli claims in the Middle East. It was evident from the very first moment that Napolitano considered foreign politics a special presidential domain. As a consequence, the idea of the Italian president as a guarantor of the continuity of Italian foreign policy took root. Probably this speech was one of the clearest in claiming the presidential political role in the Italian context, however Napolitano did not send a message to the Parliament (ex art. 87.2 Const.) on a specific policy issue during his first term and, therefore, his vision has been evaluated as moderately clear (3).

As pointed out by Cobianchi (2013), Napolitano’s visibility was high during his first term\textsuperscript{18}, as his monthly visibility mean (total time TT) during prime time on the three Rai channels was from 5.9 minutes to 12.3 minutes. As emerges in figure 6, Napolitano’s visibility tended to grow every year and especially from 2011 on (36385 seconds), when his activism in the government building sphere increased. This data can be decomposed into two elements: 1) the time granted by television to the president (news-time) which followed the same trend as the total time (TT), 2) the president’s self-managed time on TV which tended to be constant, in between 659 (2008) and 950 (2013) seconds per month. This means that even though the president’s direct use of TV (SMT) was pretty much the same for his entire term, the time granted by the mass-media to him and his initiatives doubled, as news-time (NT) was 1483 seconds per month in 2008 and 3469 seconds per month in 2013.

Fig. 6. Napolitano’s monthly visibility on three Rai Channels. (Seconds for year)

![Graph showing monthly visibility on three Rai Channels](image)

\textbf{Source: Self Elaboration of Cobianchi’s data (2013)}

Napolitano’s peak of visibility occurred in 2012 with a coverage of 37633 seconds, however, considering the monthly visibility mean, the highest value was recorded in 2013, before his re-election, with 4421 seconds. In continuity with Ciampi’s idea of building media events connected with the Italian founding myth, Napolitano organized celebrations of the 150\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the Italian Unification. In particular, he wanted to retrace the journey taken by Garibaldi’s Thousand, recreating an event which lasted almost ten months, beginning in Quarto (Genoa) on 5 May 2010 and ending on 17 March 2011, the day of the proclamation of Italian Unification (Grimaldi 2011). Notwithstanding certain expressions of dissent from

\textsuperscript{18} In Napolitano’s case, the monitoring time covers 2008-2013, namely 64 months.
right-wing political figures\(^{19}\), these presidential initiatives produced great participation on the part of the people and therefore a deeper interest on the part of the mass-media which reported Napolitano’s utterances. The same also happened when Napolitano constructed a media-event in order to reflect on the political terrorism season of the Seventies, involving right- and left-wing extremists. The idea of inviting to the *Quirinale* the widow of police commissioner Calabresi murdered by Lotta Continua, and the widow of Cesare Pinelli, the anarchist who was wrongfully accused of being one of the attackers of the *Piazza Fontana* massacre, was considered a positive and symbolic step towards national pacification.

In conclusion, Napolitano’s communicative capacity is assessed as very high (5), as the mean value during the whole monitoring period is 2790 seconds.

*The president’s relations*

Napolitano was elected at the fourth voting round with 543 votes, namely with 54.8% of parliamentary consent. At the beginning the ruling parties proposed Massimo D’Alema (the leader of DS) as their candidate for the presidency, but the opposition firmly rejected this idea and proposed other names -less engaged in party politics- such as Giuliano Amato, Lamberto Dini, Franco Marini and Mario Monti (Galliani 2012). However, the major ruling party could not accept to lose the presidency, as the democrats (DS) had already given the presidency of the Chamber to the Re-founded Communists (Bertinotti) and that of the Senate to the Daisy (Franco Marini). In addition, the government was to be led by Romano Prodi, an ex Christian Democrat. As a consequence, the major ruling party wanted one of its men in the *Quirinale* and therefore one of its candidates had to be elected without the opposition votes. This was the path they decided to follow, despite its complexity. Indeed, a majority of two thirds is required during the first three voting rounds to elect an Italian president, whereas the absolute majority is required from the fourth voting round on.

Actually, fragmentation of the candidatures was very high during the first three voting rounds (respectively 18, 23 and 28 candidates), but in the end Napolitano was chosen from among other 8 candidates only. However, blank and nullified ballots constituted 36.4%, this means that Napolitano is a clear example of “president of the majority”, as he was elected just by the ruling parties that made up Romano Prodi’s third cabinet (DS, Daisy, PRC, IDV, PDCI, Radicals Greens, Udeur)\(^ {20}\).

It was the third case since 1948, after Segni and Leone who were elected respectively with 52.6% and 52%. Therefore, we can say that there was low consent (1) on the part of his peers.

Napolitano’s level of trust among the wider public was measured through public polls provided by *Demos & Pl*. As reported in figure 7, Napolitano’s level of trust didn’t follow a clear trend as was the case with Ciampi. Indeed, at the beginning his level of trust was high (59.6%) and in the middle term it went up to very high (71.4%) but at the end of his term it decreased to moderate (54.6%).

Probably, at the beginning, citizens gave him credit for legitimacy as a test of his real capacity to be the president of all Italians as he had promised in his inaugural speech. Napolitano seemed to achieve this general consent, notwithstanding the fact that, in 2008 a new “cohabitation” started, as Berlusconi formed his fourth government after the general election victory of that year. Interestingly, as long as the right-wing coalition was able to prove its efficacy and Napolitano’s intervention was not too visible, the presidential level of trust was very high.

\(^{19}\) In particular, Northern League members such as Roberto Calderoli and even certain ministers such as that of Education, Mariastella Gelmini.

\(^{20}\) On the contrary, in April 2013 Napolitano was re-elected at the sixth voting round with 738 votes, namely with 74% of the electoral body’s consent.
However, when in 2010 the ruling coalition started to cripple and in 2011 the president had to intervene more decisively, especially in the government building sphere (Monti’s cabinet), his level of trust began to decrease (from 65.1% to 54.8%). Citizens had probably started to be critical of decisions which they could not actually control and which seemed to fall from above, even if they were necessary and even seen as the best possible choices. This hypothesis seems to explain the correlation between strong activism of the presidency in the early months of Napolitano’s second term and his severe decline in trust among citizens in 2013 (49%). However, globally the level of trust during Napolitano’s first term was high (4) as the medium value was 62.1%.

Figure 7. Napolitano’s level of trust during his term (percentage values)

Finally, the experts evaluated his global capacity to carry out his responsibilities during his first term positively, as they gave a mark of 7.7 on a scale of 1 (very bad) to 10 (excellent). Therefore, also the esteem among experts can be ranked as high (4).

The president’s reputation
Napolitano’s past performance can be considered very good (5), as he was Speaker of the Chamber from 1992 to 1994, succeeding Scalfaro. In those years the third office of the State became active and important on the political scene. Indeed, in the early Nineties, the Speaker of the Chamber, Napolitano, the president of the Senate, Spadolini, and the president of the Republic, Scalfaro gained the name of “the Trinity” for their effort to deal with the “Clean Hands” season and for their opposition to the issue of the de-legitimized Parliament which was to be dissolved (Napolitano 1994). Moreover, as Minister of the Interior in Prodi’s government, he strengthened the role of prefects and of the local government in fighting racketeering and micro-criminality, especially in the South. He dealt with the immigration issue, demanding European engagement to manage it properly and the most important outcome was the first organic law on this topic, the so-called Turco-Napolitano law. These experiences proved the capacity of Napolitano to be man of the institutions but, at the same time, to become an actual decision-maker whenever the opportunity arose, namely in the vacuum of party politics.

21 Indeed, in 2010 Gianfranco Fini, co-founder of the PDL with Silvio Berlusconi, decided to leave the party together with other deputies and senators previously part of the AN and in the following months he signed a motion of no confidence with the centrist UDC deputies. The government was saved by three votes (314 vs. 311). However, from that moment on, the parliamentary path of the government became more and more uncertain.

22 However, this is not the case of his second term, as their evaluation became more negative (6.8).
Napolitano’s perceived neutrality was quite low, especially at the beginning of his term, as he had been an active participant in a big party. He was a leader of a minority faction within the PCI, the most important opposition party of the First Republic and in addition, the largest Communist party in the Western World. In contrast to the main faction of his party, he wanted the improvement of the working-class without revolution and he pushed for change in the attitude of his party towards European integration. This position of “heterodox” communist was important in building the image of someone open to discussion, an important quality in a president who is often required to mediate between diverse positions. Notwithstanding the fact that he was always on bad terms with Berlusconi, he behaved in a similar way both with centre-right governments and centre-left governments in dealing with executive crises (Lippolis, Salerno 2013, Grimaldi 2013). Indeed, on one hand, he pressed - as much as possible - for a parliamentary solution, asking for clarifying public parliamentary debates, on the other hand, he bound the resignation of the government to the approval of the budget bill in order to respect EU obligations. Therefore, during his term the level of his perceived neutrality grew. This evaluation is consistent with that given by 63.6% of the experts who considered Napolitano “very good at unifying Italians” from 2006 to 2012\(^{23}\). Therefore, we can say that during his first term, Napolitano’s perceived neutrality was evaluated as average (3), as he was a first-level politician and the sum of positive evaluations by the experts were 93%.

Napolitano’s international credentials were particularly significant. Indeed, in the middle Seventies he was responsible for the foreign policy of the PCI, and as such, he built contacts both with European social democratic parties, especially with SPD of Willi Brandt, and with US administrations. At that time the PCI was trying to break away from the Communist Party of the USSR and to take the path of euro-communism\(^{24}\). Moreover, Napolitano spent two legislatures in the Parliament of Strasbourg and like his predecessor, Ciampi, he was aware of how the EU works. Indeed, during his presidency he always worked for Italian compliance with the agreements undertaken with European partners. As his predecessors, president Napolitano continued to travel and on certain occasions was able to clarify the Italian position on international issues. The most important demonstration of his international credibility was that he did not just meet his foreign counterparts for reasons of protocol, but that he stood in for the government with foreign Heads of Government. In particular, during the Berlusconi government crisis and the formation of Monti’s cabinet, his interpretations were asked for by Angela Merkel, Françoise Hollande and Barak Obama. In addition, as historians have pointed out (Mammarella, Cacace 2011: 308), Obama seemed to find in Napolitano his proper counterpart, as he wanted to know Napolitano’s opinion on how to face the economic crisis rather than that of the PM Berlusconi and for this reason Napolitano flew to Washington both in 2010 and before the end of his term in 2013. From the press releases it is clear that these visits were anything but ceremonial. Moreover, president Hollande behaved in the same manner in November 2012. Indeed, during Napolitano’s State visit to Paris there was a press conference to communicate the common position of Italy and France on episodes of violence in Israel and the Gaza Strip. Therefore, again Napolitano was treated and behaved like the perfect counterpart to the French Head of State, although powers in foreign policy are not assigned to the president by the Constitution. However, international presidential credibility was important when Italy had to decide how to face the Libyan war, as the cabinet played for time, while France and Great Britain organized the attack against Gaddafi. First, Napolitano declared at the UN Human Rights Council in Genève that the violence against civilians perpetrated by Gaddafi was unacceptable. Then, back in Italy, he convened the Supreme Defense Council and convinced

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\(^{23}\) On the other hand, during his second term, the evaluation changed completely, probably because Napolitano became more active in several spheres in a short time. The majority (43,1%) claims that his performance was average, 22.7% bad; 29.5% good.

\(^{24}\) Namely, in an attempt to develop a theory and practice more adequate to the democratic countries of Western Europe.
the PM to take part in the military intervention if the UNO legitimized it. According to certain scholars (De Vergottini 2011), in the foreign politics sphere there was clear trespassing of constitutional prescriptions by Napolitano, as he acted before and in the place of the executive. Therefore, Napolitano’s perceived ability to influence foreign politics was very high (5) during his term, as positive evaluations (sum of moderate and high influence) by the experts were 81%.

According to 93.1% of the experts, Napolitano’s perceived ability to solve crises was significant, as he discretionally appointed one PM, Mario Monti in 2011. Indeed, despite the bipolar context, if the executive is weak, presidential intervention is always a possibility, as the power of dissolving parliament (or not) can become an exclusive presidential prerogative. In the case of the crisis of Berlusconi’s fourth government, the intervention of the president was clear not only when he decided on Monti’s appointment, but also from the early stages involving the PM’s resignation. In a pretty anomalous way, the president of the Republic announced the up-coming Prime Minister’s resignation with a note, preceding Berlusconi’s move. Later, Napolitano appointed professor Mario Monti life senator, making his intention to nominate him Prime Minister clear (Almagisti, Grimaldi, Pasquino 2013). Indeed, Monti became PM in November 2013, after the promulgation of the budget law. Therefore, Napolitano’s perceived ability to solve crises was evaluated as very high (5) during his first term.

Napolitano’s perceived ability to influence legislation was high, even though Napolitano used his formal powers poorly with regard to the policy-making sphere (Grimaldi 2011, Lippolis e Salerno 2013). Indeed, only four interventions can be counted in this area: a law referral (art.74 Cost.); the request for the review of a law-decree; the refusal to enact a law-decree; and a legislative decree. The most discussed control action on legislation made by Napolitano occurred when he refused to enact the so-called “saving Eluana” decree, as it didn’t fit certain urgent requirements and it was in contrast with a sentence of the Court of Appeal. The government withdrew the decree and attempted to approve a bill with the same content. However, Eluana Englaro died before the bill was discussed in Parliament. This case clearly showed that the force of the president in defending his prerogatives- according to the principle of division of powers- was more incisive than that of the government (Lippolis, Salerno 2013).

On the other hand, Napolitano’s informal activity of advising, pushing or restraining, which can be summed up with the formula of moral suasion, was predominant from all points of view (Gorlani 2011). The decrease of opacity which moral suasion actions entail, was undoubtedly a peculiarity of Napolitano’s term. In other words, the president tended to disclose legislation through letters, notes, statements with the aim of clarifying and justifying his positions much more than his predecessors had done. The majority of moral suasion actions carried out by Napolitano concerned his opposition to “urgent enactment”.

Other important examples are: the presidential refusal of the constitutional bill on trial suspension for high state officers, proposed by the Berlusconi Government -after the Lodo Alfano rejection by the Constitutional Court; the criticism of the law-decree on rubbish in Campania, the so-called "promulgation with reserve" (Ruggeri 2002, 2009) of law n. 94/2009 on public security and that of the University reform

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25 Actually, constitutional theorists affirm the possibility that this complex act -as it is shared by the president and the Government- becomes a simple act when only one of the two institutions prevails (Chessa 2010).

26 The government tried to adopt a decree-law to forbid the interruption of feeding and hydration of people who cannot take care of themselves. This provision was to avoid the implementation of a sentence which allowed Mr. Englaro to put an end to his daughter’s suffering. For further information regarding the Englaro case, see Pasini (2010).

27 The president criticized the inclusion of regulations heretofore not foreseen because this behavior thwarted the presidential oversight functions, as the partial veto is not foreseen in Italian system. The most emblematic episode occurred in April 2009 at the time the approval of the so-called "incentive decree".

28 In particular, Napolitano’s doubts on the bill regarded the hypothesis that this trial suspension could also concern the president. See: Statement of the 22 October 2010. Source: Quirinale website.
(the so-called Gelmini law, n. 240/2010). According to 51.2% of the experts Napolitano had a great influence on policy-making and this was evaluated as high (4).

Conclusions

The presidents studied in this paper gained considerably high scores in the Leadership Capital index (LCI) proving that presidents can no longer be considered notaries within the Italian political system. Moreover, each of them reached high scores in different dimensions of the LCI, Scalfaro in skills, Ciampi in relations and Napolitano in reputation.

Table 8. The LCI of the Italian presidents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>SCALFARO</th>
<th>CIAMPI</th>
<th>NAPOLITANO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SKILLS capital</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Education and/or profession in law</td>
<td>Very large 4/4</td>
<td>Moderate 2/4</td>
<td>Moderate 2/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>How their role is conceived and main issues which have to be faced.</td>
<td>Moderately clear 3/5</td>
<td>Clear 4/5</td>
<td>Moderately clear 3/5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative</td>
<td>Visibility on TV</td>
<td>High 4/5</td>
<td>High 4/5</td>
<td>Very high 5/5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Longevity</td>
<td>Parliamentary/Party/Executive carrier</td>
<td>Very long 5/5</td>
<td>Absent 1/5</td>
<td>Very long 5/5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subtotal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELATIONAL capital</td>
<td>Loyalty among peers</td>
<td>Majority obtained at the election</td>
<td>Moderate 2/4</td>
<td>High 3/4</td>
<td>Low 1/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust among wider public</td>
<td>Polls on trust</td>
<td>Absent 1/5</td>
<td>Very high 5/5</td>
<td>High 4/5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood of credible leadership Esteem among experts</td>
<td>Expert evaluation</td>
<td>Moderate 3/5</td>
<td>High 4/5</td>
<td>High 4/5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subtotal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REPUTATIONAL capital</td>
<td>Past performance</td>
<td>High office holder</td>
<td>Very high 5/5</td>
<td>Very high 5/5</td>
<td>Very high 5/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived neutrality</td>
<td>Type of level party membership and experts evaluation</td>
<td>Low 2/4</td>
<td>High 4/4</td>
<td>Moderate 3/4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived influence in foreign politics</td>
<td>Expert evaluation</td>
<td>Moderate 3/5</td>
<td>High 4/5</td>
<td>Very High 5/5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived ability to manage executive crises</td>
<td>Expert evaluation</td>
<td>High 4/4</td>
<td>Average 3/4</td>
<td>High 4/4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived ability to influence policies</td>
<td>Expert evaluation</td>
<td>Moderate 3/4</td>
<td>Moderate 3/4</td>
<td>High 4/4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subtotal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>39 (medium)</td>
<td>42 (medium)</td>
<td>45 (high)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scalfaro's score was 39 out of 55, classifying him as a medium capital leader (see tab. 8). Indeed, he was able to take advantage of the particular situation of the early Nineties which demanded his intervention in many spheres and especially in that of government building. Scalfaro's strengths in
maintaining capital depended on his skills. In particular, his cognitive capabilities combined with his longevity allowed him to successfully face the attacks by right-wing parties which accused him of mismanaging executive crises without taking into account electoral results. Scalfaro firmly opposed these allegations claiming his decisions fully respected the Constitution, as in a Parliamentary system a change of government is always possible if there is a majority in Parliament to sustain it.

Moreover, he seemed to realize that the TV is the most important form of mass media and he successfully used it to defend himself against allegations regarding the SISDE scandal. However, he was unable to construct an entirely successful communicative strategy for the presidency, as his decreasing visibility on TV proved. During his term, he actually followed his vision as he became the Constitutional Guarantor he had promised to be in his Inauguration Speech. Indeed, he always refused to take into consideration the possibility of behaving as if he was in a Westminster model of democracy (Fusaro 1999). The LCI also enables us to see where political capital was lost. The analysis of Scalfaro’s leadership capital reveals two areas of weakness: one affecting his relations and the other his reputation. As for the first element, his personal loss of trust among citizen is reported by analysts (Hine, Poli 1997) especially in the last years of his term. The above evaluation is quite severe, since polls on presidential trust may never have been collected. It seems that this loss is connected with his perceived weak neutrality. Notwithstanding his second-level party membership, which favored his election as a man above daily party fights, expert evaluation of his performance during his term was low. Probably the campaign against him organized by right-wing parties and by radicals and his ill-concealed dislike for Berlusconi (Mammarella, Cacace 2011) had an impact in the long run not only on the wider public, but also on the experts. Indeed, the expert panel was equally divided between negative and positive evaluations, demonstrating how the global judgment of Scalfaro’s capacity to represent the whole nation was far from being uniform and homogeneous. Scalfaro seemed aware of this lack of capital leadership as he decided not to appoint any life Senator to avoid other allegations of his supposed partiality.

Finally, as concerns reputation, Scalfaro’s performance wasn’t overly impressive especially in foreign politics. Indeed, he lacked international credentials, as he had no important contacts abroad, and some of his positions during his term caused executive concern. For example, when he criticized Chirac and the French nuclear tests in Mururoa and the EU mismanagement of the Balkan war (Breda 2006). In conclusion, Scalfaro was the ferryman who brought Italy from the First to Second Republic, radically modifying the role of the president. Ironically, he was the bravest defender of parliamentarism, but he was forced to discretionally appoint three Prime Ministers when parliamentary parties were blocked. However, he was reticent to push himself too far as he didn’t believe in the majoritarian model of democracy. Ciampi’s score was 42 out of 55, classifying him as a medium capital leader (see tab. 8).

Ciampi’s strengths are to be found in the relations area. Indeed, he was able to build and maintain a high level of popularity among citizens for his entire term. This popular consent enabled him to avoid reprisal by political forces both when he seemed to favor and to thwart government plans. Indeed, even Berlusconi was careful to criticize him, despite Ciampi’s legislative control producing certain PM defeats. Moreover, Ciampi achieved great consent among MPs, as his election was decided with a bipartisan agreement. According to the experts, he was good at carrying out his responsibilities as president. In particular, his capacity to build a sort of civil religion, a re-discovering of the Italian founding myth based on the Risorgimento and on the Resistance, was highly appreciated (Nevola 2003). The analysis of Ciampi’s leadership capital reveals one major area of weakness affecting his skills. Indeed, he was a political outsider and he could not count on a long political carrier and, therefore, he had to become familiar with the complexity of the Italian political system. Probably this is why Ciampi seemed to interact more with the citizens than with parties (Pasquino 2003b). Notwithstanding his initial self-restraint, he was able to exploit TV in order to increase presidential visibility. Indeed, he was fully engaged in the
construction of a number of media-events regarding a new form of patriotism -"constitutional patriotism" (Habermas 1992)- which helped Italians to find other identification symbols after the defeat of party ideologies.

As regards reputation, Ciampi was especially appreciated for his neutrality and his influence in foreign politics. As the experts stated, Ciampi was probably one of the most capable presidents in unifying Italians. Indeed, Ciampi's political project on patriotism (Grimaldi, Ricamboni 2007) was to be an answer to the lack of political identification after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the crisis of the party system. He created a synthesis between the re-evaluation of national values- which were ignored during the First Republic in order to avoid an analysis of their exploitation by fascism- and the development of the European values. For Ciampi, "the identity of the modern citizen had necessarily to be multiple as one could no longer define oneself with reference to regional or national levels alone, but one had inevitably to include Europe" (Grimaldi 2011: 119).

Ciampi's international credentials made him incisive in this sphere especially when those of the PM seemed to be compromised. Indeed, according to his diplomatic counselor Puri Purini (2012), Ciampi was one of the leading actors in Italian foreign politics in the same way as the Foreign Minister, the PM and the cabinet. In particular, Ciampi stated that, as the president had the function of external representation of the country, he was to be considered a guarantor of continuity in foreign politics. Ciampi put this thought into practice with the Iraqi war. The PM wanted to support the USA and the UK, while Ciampi was inclined to maintain a position similar to that of the majority of EU partners, namely France and Germany. The president used his power within the Supreme Defense Council to force Berlusconi's government to avoid direct Italian military intervention (Bellandi 2011, Galliani 2012) even if the US use of Italian territory to favor Iraqi intervention was granted.

According to the experts, Ciampi's leadership was credible both considering his influence in policy-making and in government-building. Notwithstanding the fact that parties were stronger during his term, and therefore he didn't have to face difficult executive crises, the experts seemed to believe he would have been able to solve them successfully.

Ciampi's leadership was appreciated both by the citizens and by the political class, as the parties -even Berlusconi's party- asked him to run for a second term. However, he declined this offer because of age and because he didn't want to create a precedent.

Napolitano's score was 45 out of 55, classifying him as a high capital leader (see tab. 8). Indeed, he was able to act in substitution of parliamentary parties in the formation of the Monti government and on certain occasions in substitution of the government in foreign politics, therefore, he was a sort of First in Command.

Napolitano's strengths lay in his reputation. Indeed, his long experience within the institutions clearly helped him to successfully carry out his responsibilities both in legislative control and in government formation. In the first case, his perceived influence in legislation was evaluated as high as he carefully, but significantly used his hard power (suspensive vetoes and enactment of law-decrees) and diffusively his soft power, namely moral suasion. He always defended his prerogatives, at times even challenging the government, as the Englaro case demonstrated. However, sometimes his utterances regarding bills under parliamentary debate seemed to force Parliament to follow the EU point of view, as with the case of "fiscal compact" (Lippolis, Salerno 2013).

As for the government building sphere, he was very careful in managing the crisis of Berlusconi Government IV to avoid to being accused of partiality. Indeed, when Berlusconi's government seemed about to fall in 2010, Napolitano attempted to delay the verification of confidence until the stability law for 2011 was passed. This presidential action, taken to modify the voting calendar, was due to the need to define the economic situation before the political one. The verification of confidence occurred one month
after the beginning of the crisis and in this period of time the centre right was able to form the so-called “Group of those responsible”, in other words, opposition deputies who decided to vote for the government, which was saved by three votes and active until October 2011. However, when the Prime Minister’s resignation became effective, Napolitano was very quick to solve the crisis and form a new government.

Napolitano’s past experience as responsible for foreign policy within the PCI and as MP in the European Parliament was important when the executive seemed uncertain on how to manage the international economic crisis and the Libyan war. During his term Napolitano was inflexible in demanding Italian compliance to EU allegations and on several occasions he was the interlocutor with European partners rather than the PM. Moreover, he strengthened the role of the Supreme Defense Council -which had been an advisory body- and became an effective decisional arena especially during the Lybian crisis. Italy was in an embarrassing situation, as in 2008 PM Berlusconi signed a friendship treaty with Geddafi which excluded any possibility of Italian intervention with the other European countries to stop the civilian massacre. Italian isolation within the NATO was seen as a great problem by the president who convinced the executive to consider the treaty null if the UNO legitimized military intervention. When this happened, Italy actively participated in the mission as Napolitano had promised at the UNO Human Rights Council in Genève. In this case, Napolitano was accused of trespassing in the field of foreign politics, as he took decisions which should have been taken by the government.

The only questionable area in Napolitano’s reputation regards his neutrality. Indeed, his first level party membership could be seen to question his capacity to represent all Italians, as he had promised to do in his Inaugural speech. However, the experts confirmed how his engagement in the integration of the nation increased his consent. For example he was able to build bridges between the victims of the political Terrorism of the Seventies. Moreover, also the symmetrical choices he adopted in dealing with executive crises, both with left and right cabinets, strengthened his perceived neutrality. This problem of neutrality is connected with another weakness of Napolitano’s relational capital, namely his low level of credibility among peers. Indeed, Napolitano was perceived as a partisan president and therefore he was chosen by a majority of left parties. However, during his term he was able to build a different image, as both public polls and expert evaluations confirmed. But from 2011 on, his level of trust began to decrease.

As regards skills, Napolitano received an incredible score. Indeed, he has had the longest political carrier any president has ever had and he has been very good at making the presidency visible and known to citizens. Indeed, his visibility on the TV was very high, as Napolitano used any and every means to disclose his positions through letters, notes, statements with the aim of clarifying and justifying his decisions. Notwithstanding a certain concern for his interventionism, Napolitano’s leadership was positively evaluated during his first term, as parties -in a deadlock after the 2013 elections- asked him to run for a second term. He accepted on condition that the political parties reform the institutions.

It is probably too early to say, but in this second term Napolitano seems to have dismantled part of his previous political leadership capital as it is very difficult to be an effective decision-maker and to be perceived as a neutral constitutional guarantor at the same time.

In conclusion, the LCI has proved to be a useful instrument to test the credible leadership of Italian presidents, as it identifies weaknesses and strengths in details. Indeed, it allows to investigate individual aspects of leadership, starting a path that was disregarded by Italian political scientists so far. In particular, the analysis has shown why presidents have been able to obtain the office and, to some extent, how they have been successful in maintaining their role avoiding criticism on the part of the political class and on the part of the wider public. Furthermore, in Napolitano’s case the LCI, especially as the reputation dimension is concerned, explains why he has been re-elected.
Even though the index can be improved and the use of certain indicators can be modified, by the means of other data sources, this attempt seems to be essential in order to fully understand how leadership works.
ANNEX I

The Score System

A president's cognitive skill is valued absent (1) when the president doesn't have an education in law; moderate (2) when he has a law degree; large (3) when he has an education in law and has a job connected with it, such as law professor, law consultant, lawyer; very large (4) when he is judge at any level before taking office. [1-4]

A president's vision is valued absent (1) when the president doesn't make any reference to the conception of his role during the Inauguration Speech and when there aren't any Speeches to the Parliament on a specific policy problem; unclear (2) when the president doesn't make any reference to the conception of his role but sends a Speech to Parliament involving one clear policy issue, moderately clear (3) when the president specifies his role about but there aren't any Speeches to Parliament or if there are Speeches they are somewhat vague, dealing with different issues; clear (4) when the president specifies his role during the Inauguration Speech and when his Speech to Parliament deals with a specific policy problem; very clear (5) when he expresses opinions on his role moreover, when his Speech to Parliament deals with a specific policy problem and he also identifies policy solutions.

Considering existing data on communicative performance of the president by the "Osservatorio di Pavia", this is valued absent (1) when his presence on TV is not measurable or is lower than 1000 seconds; low (2) when his monthly visibility mean during prime time on the three Rai channels is in between 1000 and 1500 seconds; moderate (3) when his monthly visibility mean during prime time is in between 1500 and 2000 seconds, large (4) when his monthly visibility mean during prime time is in between 2000 and 2500 seconds, very large (5) when his monthly visibility mean during prime time is more than 2500 seconds.

The president's longevity in politics before taking office is assessed considering previous studies (Grimaldi 2012) and it is valued absent (1) when he doesn't have a political (party, executive or parliamentary) carrier or it is shorter than 10 years; short (2) when his political carrier is in between 11 and 22 years; moderate (3) when his political carrier is in between 22 and 33 years; long (4) when his political carrier is in between 33 and 44 years; very long (5) when his political carrier is longer than 44 years.

The consent of the president among peers is valued low (1) when the majority obtained during presidents' election is in between 50% and 59%; moderate (2) when the majority obtained during his election is in between 60% and 69%; high (3) when the majority obtained during his election is in between 70% and 79%, very high (4) when the majority obtained during his election is more than 80%.

Presidents' trust among the wider public is measured considering annual polls by Demos &PI on "Relationship between Italians and the State" valued absent (1) when there is no data or it is lower than 30%; low (2) when the yearly trust percentage is in between 30% and 43%; moderate (3) when the yearly trust percentage is in between 43% and 57%, high (4) when the yearly trust percentage is in between 57% and 70%, very high (5) when the yearly trust percentage is over 70%.

The appreciation of presidents by experts is valued absent (1) when on a scale of 1 (very bad) to 10 (excellent) the medium value given by experts is from 1 to 2; low (2) when the medium value given by experts is from 3 to 4; moderate (3) when the medium value given by experts is from 5 to 6; high (4) when the medium value given by experts is from 7 to 8; very high (5) when the medium value given by experts is from 9 to 10.
Considering reputational variables, the president's past performance is valued absent (1) if he never got a position as high office holder before becoming president; poor (2) if he was high office holder in public administration, such as president of State Council, president of Audit Court, president of Court of Appeal, president of some Independent Authority etc.; moderate (3) if he was high office holders in economic or social organizations such as Chairman of Trade Unions, president of Central Bank, president of Industrial Association, etc.; high (4) if he was Minister; very high (5) if he was president of the Republic, president of the Senate, president of the Chamber, Prime Minister, president of the Constitutional Court.

The president's perceived neutrality is valued absent (1) if he was first-level politician (namely, Chairman or leader of party factions of a great party) before taking office and the sum of the positive evaluations (average + high) given by experts is lower than 55%; low (2) if he was second-level politician or independent and the sum of the positive evaluations given by experts is lower than 55%; moderate (3) if he was first-level politician and the sum of the positive evaluations given by experts is more than 55%; high (4) if he was second-level politician or independent and the sum of the positive evaluations given by experts is more than 55%.

The president's perceived influence in foreign politics is valued considering the experts judgments and it is absent (1) when the sum of the positive evaluations (average + high) given by experts is lower than 20% low (2) when the sum of the positive evaluations given by experts is in between 20% and 40%; moderate (3) when the sum of the positive evaluations given by experts is in between 40% and 60%; high (4) when the sum of the positive evaluations given by experts is in between 60% and 80%; very high (5) when the sum of the positive evaluations given by experts is more than 80%.

The president's perceived ability to solve crises is valued considering the expert judgments and it is absent (1) when the majority of them say he is "not at all powerful"; low (2) when the majority of them say he is "not very powerful"; moderate (3) when the majority of them say he is "quite powerful"; high (4) when the majority of them say he is "very powerful".

The president's perceived ability to control legislation is evaluated considering the judgments of the experts and it is absent (1) when the majority of them say he is "not at all powerful"; low (2) when the majority of them say he is "not very powerful"; moderate (3) when the majority of them say he is "quite powerful"; high (4) when the majority of them say he is "very powerful".
References:


83-110.


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